
TEXT: YES Students Reflect on their Program

VOICE OVER: The Youth Exchange and Study Program seeks to advance mutual understanding between the U.S. and countries with significant Muslim populations. The Program's for students aged 15 to 17 and those chosen will study at a high school and live with an American host family for up to one academic year.

After the year of study, students gather in Washington, D.C. before heading back to their home countries. We spoke with some of the students to find out about their experience with the YES Program.

STUDENT: "Finding Out About YES"

"I learned about the YES Program through an ad that they sent out. I saw the ad and I was really interested."

STUDENT: "My parents helped me out. Like, we viewed the papers and everything and we sent it to the program."

STUDENT: "My friend told me about it. He was a YES scholar. He told it me it was a great year and he had lots of fun. He told me to try it and I'll have a great experience. And, I did."

STUDENT: "Both my brother and my cousin were exchange students last year. They had a great time and so I just decided to become an exchange student myself."

TEXT: "What About Your Family?"

STUDENT: "And going to a different country alone, for a girl, was a big thing and a big step for like, my parents. But, my family was really liberal and they allowed me to do so."

STUDENT: "Um, I'm like the only boy in the family and like, the oldest, so they were like really tied up to me and it was really hard, but then like, they get supportive, like eventually."

TEXT: "Adapting to America"

STUDENT: "It took me maybe like, maybe, like two weeks to just get a feel of how everything...how everything works."

STUDENT: "I had to get used to, like, being just with my host parents, host sister, which was hard because I don't know my host sister that much and I don't know what she like, and she was 17, and you know, she's American girl, and I'm a Muslim. So, it was like, hard to find out what she likes."

STUDENT: "After like two month, I just, actually felt like I'm a part of it."

TEXT: "What Did You Learn?"

STUDENT: "I learned responsibility here. I learned, like, I became more confident and just be, open-minded for everything and anything, any change, basically, any people, any religion."

STUDENT: "Being a part of the YES Program has given me, has defined my priorities for me. I know now what I stand for and I know what I'm going to pursue as a career and as a profession and it has given me something to remember forever."

STUDENT: "I got to experience more variety, more diversity. So, I got to experience how people live and coexist with each other."

STUDENT: "And, I'm just going to go home and be more open-minded and look at everything as a beautiful thing."

STUDENT: "If anyone is willing to change their lives, if they need a direction, they should definitely go for YES Program.

TEXT: To learn how you can become a YES student, visit:

Exchanges.state.gov

The YES Program is sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

Some photos compliments of Nasser Al Baluchi.

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